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C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 001366

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/BCLTV, EAP/PD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/19/2014

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: MILITARY INTELLIGENCE-AFFILIATED MEDIA SHUT DOWN

REF: A. RANGOON 1359

1B. RANGOON 1345

Classified By: COM Carmen Martinez for Reasons 1.4 (b,d)

11. (C) Summary: Following the October 19 removal of General Khin Nyunt as Prime Minister and Chief of Military Intelligence (ref A), 32 journals and magazines with links to Military Intelligence (MI) have apparently been temporarily closed down. Quasi-independent media licensed through other ministries have so far been unaffected by yesterday's events. It is unclear whether the MI Office of Strategic Studies will retain its function of censorship over international publications and the high-profile, bilingual Myanmar Times. Stripping Military Intelligence of its media appendages will deprive MI of some income. This could be part of a broader move ordered by the regular military to separate MI from the business dealings that provide its operating costs. End summary.

12. (C) Journals and magazines that had been operating under license from Military Intelligence have been told to temporarily halt publication according to a source at one of the affected journals. Although this week's editions will appear, publishers were told when they submitted them to the Home Ministry's Press Scrutiny Board for censorship to halt work on the next edition until they obtain new licenses. The source says that 32 publications may be affected, including the 7 Day News, the Myanmar News Gazette, Wun Tha Nu, the Morning Post, and the high profile Myanmar Times, a colorful bilingual weekly newspaper run jointly by an Australian businessman and the son of MI Brigadier General Thein Swe. The Myanmar Times had unique status as the only local publication that received censor board clearance from MI's Office of Strategic Studies, rather than the Press Scrutiny Board. Sources at the Myanmar Times say they have not received clearance on this week's edition because their usual interlocutors at MI are either under arrest or unavailable. However, the newspaper intends to proceed with a planned move to larger quarters, under the assumption that the stoppage is temporary in nature.

13. (SBU) Publishers of quasi-independent media (weekly newspapers and journals run by private citizens with a license from a government entity and subject to government press censorship rules) not affiliated with MI, such as Myanmar Dana and Kumudra, have said they don't appear to be affected by the change in leadership. Strangely, however, they were granted a respite this next week from carrying the usual obligatory "policy" diatribe reprinted from opinion pages of the government-run media.

14. (C) Comment: Seen in the context of economic competition between MI and the regular military (described in ref B), stripping Military Intelligence of its media appendages will deprive MI of some income, though not a large amount. However, this could be part of a broader move ordered by the regular military to separate MI from the business operations that provide its budget. End comment.
Martinez